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A NATION'S IDEAL

Why We Were Neutral
and
Why We Are Now At War

Address before
University City Club
St. Louis, Mo.
October 23, 1917
by
CAMPBELL ALLISON
of the
ST. LOUIS BAR

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Mr. Chairman:—Almost from the beginning of time, two great principles of government among men have struggled for supremacy. The one system claiming the divine right of kings to rule by military force. The other system claiming the divine right of self government.

These two systems of government are now engaged in a war of extermination. One will survive, and the other perish. Eventually the world will be ruled by democracy or by one central military autocracy. Those of our people, who keep abreast of the world's events, fully understand that the vital issue of this war is the destiny of humanity.

The great mass of our people—the Nobility of America; the artisan at his bench, the merchant at his counter, the housewife in her kitchen, the man with the hoe, don't bother much about the real causes of the war. It is enough for them that their country is at war. They are always patriotic; they are born that way. While the Government was neutral, they preached neutrality. When war was declared, they went after the Kaiser. Their motto always: "My Country; may she always be right. But right or wrong, my Country." God bless them. They made this Government, and they can change it if they want to, and they give freely of their lives, their fortunes and sacred honor.

"Theirs not to question why
"Theirs but to make reply
"Theirs but to do and die

when their Country calls."

But we have another class; the "Show me" people, and they are not all from Missouri either. Their reading confined to newspaper headlines; their views of this war are gathered largely from the remarks of their companions. Having heard the agitator, the thoughtless idler or the German spy declare "Wilson kept us out of war until after election," "We went into war to save our loans to the Allies," "It is a rich man's war for

profits," they half believe it is true, and are indifferent, and are willing to "Let George do it."

If these people could be made to fully understand the real reason why, for more than two and a half years we kept out of war; why we suddenly threw aside our neutrality, and entered into it with our whole heart, a sufficient volunteer army could be immediately raised, and its equipment would become a national holiday. Those of us, denied the privilege of going to the front, can do yeoman service at home, by reaching after these people; by going to them in their shops and homes and explaining fully how the progress of Prussia's military ambition became a menace to the democracy in America.

Democracy means the right of the people to govern themselves. It follows that if the people of Germany desire to be governed by military autocracy, in which they have no voice, it is their undoubted right to be so governed. It also follows that so long as the Government of Germany is content with governing people who are willing to be governed by it, democracy makes no protest. But it follows, as night the day, that if the German Government, having conceived the idea of a world empire by military force, with Berlin its capital, and finds itself in a position to realize its ambition, it is our sacred duty to interfere, else government by the people must perish.

Prussia's war spirit is not of recent origin. Caesar paid tribute to the fierce and warlike disposition of the Teutons. Mirabou said, "The soil of Prussia produces vegetation by cultivation, but produces war spontaneously." Napoleon said that Prussians are hatched out of cannon balls. The father of Frederick the Great created the real cause of this war by organizing the standing army system, by which practically every man in his kingdom became a soldier, so efficient that he could fire five shots to three of any other.

It was this system which enabled his son, Frederick the Great, (1740) to take possession of Silesia, before Austria or France could interfere. He kept Silesia, and made it Prussian. Frederick the Great tried through the "Furstenbund" and otherwise to organize the Ger-

man States about him into a war machine with which to crush his enemies. Failing in this, in 1772, he, with Austria, forcibly dismembered Poland, annexing the German portion thereof, which now constitutes West Prussia.

It remained for Prussia, under the "Iron Rule of Bismarck" to accomplish the forcible amalgamation of the German States. At the close of the Austrian War in 1866, she took military possession of Hanover and the North German States which had not aided her in war. She extended to Bavaria, Saxony, Wurtemberg and the more powerful Rhine Provinces, their choice between war and coalition. They feared Prussia, but they feared war more, and came into the Confederation of German States.

Out of this most unwilling union, conceived in fear, was afterwards born the "Empire of blood and iron," improperly christened, "The German Empire," for it was thoroughly Prussian from core to circumference.

Immediately there began a systematic assimilation of the old German thought, character and disposition, into the war spirit of Prussia. The classic literature of Schiller and Goethe was pushed aside, and effusions, reeking with the arrogant idea that the Teuton is a superior race, destined by the Almighty to rule the world, paid for a public expense, were preached from the pulpit and school room. The philosophy of Hegel and Emmanuel Kent were made to give way to a military philosophy, which seeks to justify the complete destruction of outside populations as giving the Teuton Race more room to grow in the world. Her contribution to the literature and philosophy of the world has not kept pace with her progress in the art of war and the chemistry of high explosives.

The melodies of Beethoven, Mozart and Wagner, and the Wedding March of Mendelssohn, seem strangely out of harmony with the war spirit of the new Empire. **"Die Wacht am Rhein"** fitted more naturally into its military cadence.

The old German ideals, the ideals that loved their fellowman; the ideals, honored and respected by the

entire world, the ideal so fitly expressed in the great bulk of our citizens of German birth and descent, all passed beneath, completely obsessed in the merciless greed of Prussia's military ambition. Like:

> The lady from the Niger
> Who tried to ride a tiger,
> Returning from the ride
> The lady was inside
> And a smile on the face of the tiger.

The Empire having given Prussia military supremacy; bound to her the ties of blood and kindred ambition, her relations with Austria ceased to be war. They became politics. Her system of assimilation was applied to her ancient enemy. The Hapsburgs found themselves unable to cope with the Hohenzollerns when the game was statescraft. Superior cunning and a dominant disposition prevailed. Prussian diplomacy became the real power behind the throne—Austria the real vassal of Germany. Alliance with Austria thus secured, (1879) her military strength vastly increased thereby; Prussia looked worldward for a wider field for her military ambition.

Alexander the Great is said to have wept because there were no more worlds for him to conquer. Prussia had no occasion to weep. A world empire, with Berlin its capital, and the ancient glories of Rome and Carthage would fade by comparison. The plan required high daring and low diplomacy. Prussia was well supplied with both. No occasion to Hooverize the latter especially.

The contiguous territory about her was necessary for her plan. She proceeded to acquide it with military precision. Even before the empire was formed, for no other reason than that she had the power, and wanted the territory, for one purpose, to construct the Kiel Canal, a part of her military plan, (1866) she took forcible possession of Schleswig-Holstein, half the territory of Denmark, and proceeded to thoroughly Prussionize it.

In 1870, by deceiving the German people, just as they are being today deceived as to the real cause of the war; by basely concealing the true purport of the Ems telegram, and pretending that the same contained a threat of France to make war, she secured the co-operation of the German people, in a merciless war for conquest, upon France, and took away the province of Alsace-Lorraine. These she proceeded to Prussianize systematically.

In 1882, she forced Italy into a "Triple Alliance," whereby her army and navy were added to the military strength of Prussia.

While acting as one of the pawn brokers for the Balkan States, she shrewdly permitted her ally, Austria, from time to time, to annex such thereof as best suited their interests. Dalmatria, Istria, Trieste and Croatia were unwillingly added to her military strength. As late as 1908, when the growing spirit of Balkan independence was seriously threatening a successful revolution against the murderous tyranny of Turkey, Emperor Franz Joseph, in violation of his contract, but with the secret approval of Germany, laconically announced to the world, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzgovinia, and the placing upon the throne of Albania, a king of Prussian choice. Thus was all hope of Balkan independence destroyed, but about three and one-half millions of people unwillingly added to the military strength of Prussia.

The inference is justified, that by guaranteeing to the Sultan of Turkey the unmolested privilege of massacreing the Christians in Armenia and elsewhere at his pleasure; by agreeing that German Officers would feign conversion to Mohammedan faith, and add German Kultur to the fanatical cruelties of Turkish warfare, she was able to conclude an unholy alliance with this plague spot of the world, by which her military influence was extended over Asia Minor, even to the western border of Persia. Thus, by military efficiency alone, against the people's will, Prussia has grown from an insignificant province on the bleak coast of the Baltic, into the Im-

perial Empire of Germany, and her military influence has been extended over Europe and Western Asia.

At the beginning of this war, her military dominion embraced the entire heart of Europe, and extended from the North sea and the Baltic sea clear through to Bagdad and the Indian Ocean. In all this vast acquired territory, government by military force was supreme, the will of the people ignored, and their interests considered only when the same were not in conflict with the paramount interests of the German States.

We looked with indifference upon this rapid growth of military power. It was European politics. How could it harm us? Our freedom seemed secure. The great ocean rolled between the Land of the Free and the home of military oppression. The precepts of the lowly Nazarene: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," seemed so firmly rooted in the conscience of the world, that war of mere conquest seemed no longer possible. Hence the Prussian scheme of world domination, seemed too gigantic and too colossal to be taken seriously. We looked upon it as an iridescent dream, destined to fade in the light of practical experience, and we saw in the growing power of Prussia, no menace to democracy in America.

We even viewed, with amusement, the daring cunning with which the German Government, seemingly entered into the spirit in which the nations of the world preached the gospel of peace and disarmament; saw her assist in the creation of Hague Tribunals for the settlement of international difficulties, which would make war unnecessary. Yet, while the nations of the earth were beating their swords into plow shares, permitting the Dove of Peace to nest in their cannon mouths the Imperial Government of Germany, with Michavillian duplicity, was building up the greatest military system the world has ever known, and secretly equipping it with hitherto unheard of machinery of destruction.

Even when we knew that she had begun this unholy war, begun it for the sole reason that her plan was matured, the time ripe; she was fully prepared, the rest of the world was unprepared; begun it in the cold calculat-

ing conviction that having once crushed France, she could subdue England while she was yet unprepared. we were still unwilling to believe in the existence of a design, on the part of the German Government, to crush democracy in the world. One hundred years of peace had not sufficed to entirely eradicate, from the minds of our people, the memory of our war for independence with our English cousins. Many of our people believed, honestly believed the absurd claim of Prussia that the war had been thrust upon her; that she was fighting for the Fatherland.

We were a nation of peace lovers. We remembered what Washington had said about entangling European alliances; we kept ourselves aloof from the struggle, tried to maintain a dignified neutrality. It was a cruel and unnecessary war. We didn't quite understand what it was all about. It seemed to us like a war for commerce, between England and Germany; but it wasn't our war. We refused still to see, in the ultimate triumph of Prussian military autocracy, any real danger to democracy at home.

When the Lusitania was sunk, our wrath was aroused, but a cool head was in control. The vessel belonged to a belligerent nation, actually engaged in war with Germany. Outside the four-mile limit from our shores, her decks afforded no greater indemnity from attack, than did so much of the soil of England itself. On the other hand, it was a coward's act, and richly merited war. Opinions were divided. The question was close. We finally gave Germany the benefit of the doubt, and counseled neutrality and peace.

When the Sussex and the Frye were torpedoed, we accepted the apology, grudgingly given, and in the spirit of Him who said: "If thine enemy smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other," we counseled peace and moderation.

When Bernstorff, the consular representative of the German Government, betrayed his sacred trust, filled our land with spies, aided and abetted the destruction of our factories and the murder of our citizens, sought to involve us in a war with Mexico and Japan, we talked

as people talk, who care alone for peace and the profits on war contracts.

When vessel after vessel of neutral nations had been sent to the bottom; vessels manned in part by American sailors, vessels often carrying American mothers with American babies in their arms, ruthlessly torpedoed without warning, we protested to the German Government. But our protest was not in anger; not alone in the name of American Right, but in the name of humanity; and we willingly believed the promise of the German Government that in the future, she would conduct her naval warfare along the lines of international law and respect the right of neutrals, and we rejoiced that the pen was mightier than the sword.

But there came a time when peace talk was cowardice, and war became a necessity. We discovered that the promise of the German Government to respect the right of neutrals on the high seas, was a false promise, a mere subterfuge, made only for the purpose of getting a year's time in which to construct enough submarines to enable her to starve England and France into submission. Such a fleet having been constructed, on January 30, 1917, she brazenly announced her intention to resume unrestricted submarine warfare on the following morning.

On the following morning, our Government was no longer confronted by a theory, as to the intention of Germany. It was face to face with a fact. France exhausted; the resources of England strained to a breaking test; a submarine development that not only threatened the destruction of France and England, but able to cross the Atlantic and infest our coast like a swarm of huge leviathans of the deep, and against which our navy was next to helpless. The German system of espionage had been uncovered. It smelled to Heaven with human confidence basely betrayed. Boy-ed, Zimmerman and Bernstorff had been caught red handed. There existed, no longer, rational doubt that in the Prussian plan for world dominion, the detail of the dismemberment of the United States as a spoil of war had been already agreed upon. In the face of these facts, the deliberate announce-

ment of the German Government of her intention to resume unrestricted submarine warfare was a challenge to the world for world supremacy.

Then the scales fell from our eyes. The mirage became a fact. World empire by force, with Berlin as its capital, was no longer a Prussian dream, but a present probability. The United States was the only barrier between Pan-Germania and its fullest realization. From Berlin to Bagdad was but a step in the way; from Callais to London a shorter one; Liverpool to New York, an easier one. The rainbow of the Prussian dream ended in the land too rich and too indolent to prepare for its own defense; **William II, Emperor of the World,** was the real goal of Prussian ambition.

Then it was we understood, for the first time, why the solemn covenant she had made with Belgium was torn to pieces and contemptuously referred to as a mere scrap of paper. Ours would be treated likewise.

We knew then that Belgium had been invaded, her manhood deported into slavery, her womanhood into a servedom worse than slavery, not because the same was a military necessity, but in order that Belgium should become Prussian soil forever, just as Schleswig-Holstein and Alsace-Lorraine. Then we understood why the aged, the extreme young, the sick and infirm, the men too weak to work in the mines and factories of Germany, the women unserviceable were not deported. It cost less to destroy, than to feed them. We cast the veil of charity over Liege, Louverne and Cardinal Mercier, **lest we forget.**

We knew why hospitals had been fired upon, frequently, deliberately. German soldiers had been taught, that the Red Cross was an organization for torturing German Prisoners to death. But why were sky pilots rewarded with an iron cross for their bravery, their chivalry in killing English Babies? Why was Edith Cavel shot?

We knew why the Lusitania, the Sussex and the Frye, with their priceless cargoes of American lives, had been ruthlessly sent to the bottom. But why were countless ships of neutral nations "Spurlosversenkt"' (sunk with-

out leaving a trace)? Why were ships of mercy, flying the Red Cross, bound from America with food and clothing for suffering women and children sent to the bottom; cold blooded murder on the high seas in the interest of the Imperial Government of Germany.

These acts were done by men created in the image of God, with faces that wore the imprint of a kindly heart; not willingly, we trust, but by stern orders of the Government that dared not be disobeyed. How was the Imperial Government of Germany to be benefited by the wholesale murder of noncombatants, what military advantage resulted from the killing of innocent school children? Let us see.

It has been said that Attela, the famous Hun of old, inspired such terror among the peasantry of Europe, that it was popular folklore that the grass would never grow again in a spot where his horse had trod. Unwilling to be outdone by the military splendor of their ancient kinsman, the Prussian Government, by these acts of vandalism, by these inhuman atrocities, was seeking to so terrorize the neutral nations of the world, that they would gladly submit to German Rule, rather than incur the horrors that would surely attend their refusal.

It was to create a reign of terror in the world, that the German Government threw overboard the chart and compass of humanity and steered the ship of German State, alone by the light of poisoned gas and "Flamme warfer."

It was that Germany might be feared, that she forgot God, and planned her faith wholly upon submarine assassination, the last word of kings.

Then we knew that the government that could do these things, had no conscience; that no sacred thing would be respected if it stood in the way of its ambition.

Lincoln said, "This Government cannot live half free and half slave," and we who loved Lincoln, finally understood that government of the people and by the people could not longer endure in the world by the side of a government by the divine right of the king, if the king be mad from drunken thirst for military power. We

finally realized that if democracy should live in America, Prussian Military Autocracy must be destroyed in Europe.

And we went into this war with clean hands, not in anger, not for revenge, because the Lusitania was sunk, but with deliberation. We went into war, not because Germany had denied us the right to walk in the highways of the commerce of the world without the permission of a Prussian Soldier, or because our ships were verboten to venture upon the high seas without wearing the badge of servitude. Not alone because she deliberately planted mines in the neutral currents of the ocean, which destroyed our commerce, and murdered our sailors without warning, but because in her drunken arrogance Germany proposed to destroy democracy in the world, and was able to do it, unless we acted quickly and at once. We are fighting today upon the soil of France, a second war of American Independence, and our foe knows no God, but only the machine power of military organization.

A nation conceived in independency, a people, born with the inalienable right of self government, cannot but draw its sword on such provocations. To do otherwise would be cowardice.

But justified as we are from these provocations, there is still another reason why we are in this war. Our Nation's Ideal. Imperialism has ever blighted the cradle of the human race, as well as the continent of Europe. Self governments sprang up over there occasionally, but the soil and the environments were not conducive to their growth and development. The continent of America with its vastness, its fullness, was reserved as a sprouting bed for world's democracy. When our Government was first ordained, the separation of the colonies from the Mother Country was all that was immediately desired. It was popularly supposed that it was a private affair, belonging exclusively to the people of the Thirteen Colonies, and the states that would afterwards come into the Union.

Some fifty years afterwards, President Monroe announced that "the soil of the American Continent was

no longer a subject of colonization by European Powers." By this he meant that our Declaration of Independence was not confined to the people of the United States, but extended to the people of the American Continent. This was as far as the Monroe Doctrine went; a doctrine imperfectly understood by our people, and grudgingly respected by European Powers.

But the world has advanced since the Monroe Doctrine was announced. The divine command "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" has outgrown the swaddling clothes of theological dogma, and stands forth today a living spirit in the world—a spirit in man, which makes him know why it lives, and for what purpose he lives, a spirit which recognizes the same rights, the same purposes in its neighbor—a spirit which demands that nations keep faith with each other, just as individuals must keep with each other. Where art thy brother's keeper.

Our Independence now appeared in its true light. It may have been the hand of fate that guided the Pilgrim Bark across the stormy Atlantic to the rock bound coast of New England, but it was the hand of God that directed the pen that wrote our Declaration of Independence. The words "All men" are not restrictive words. They don't mean "some men." "All men are created created equal in their right to self government" never did mean, was never intended to apply exclusively to the people of the Thirteen Colonies, or to the people of the American Continent, but extended to, and embraced the people of the entire world.

Our declaration of rights was a declaration of human right; a symbol of self government for the world, conceived by the same spirit that actuated Arnold Winkleried in his struggle for Swiss liberty, of Rasseau and Lafayette in their struggles for liberty in France, of Louis Kossuth for liberty in Hungaria, the spirit of Kusciuszko for liberty in Poland, of Garibaldi for liberty in Italy, of Tom Payne and Patrick Henry for liberty in America. The brotherhood of man, struggling for the rights of self government, against military government.

On the second of April, our President, realizing that the living spirit that lay behind our Government, meant self government for mankind, asked a united people to "make the world a safe place for democracy." He struck the keynote of our national existence, our nation's ideal. Then, for the first time, was the real spirit of our independence known and understood by the world. The name "America" was no longer the name of some land. It became the name of a living principle: the principle of self government for the world. A statue of Liberty which enlightens the world, its rays carrying a message of love to our neighbors in Europe. To the lowly Slavok of Bohemia, the Serb of Hungary and the Cossack of Russia, who, seeing its gleam, may take heart again, for a new day has dawned in the world. Military Government must give way to the Divine Right of self government, and there will be no peace with Prussian Autocracy still in the saddle, with power to further harm the world.

America went into this war not in anger, for revenge, but for the well deliberated purpose of making the world safe for democracy, and yon flag, which is no longer the flag of America, but the flag of humanity, the flag that has never turned away from moral wrong, will not quit this struggle with its task half accomplished.

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